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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the needs of the adult learner and how these needs are being met at Kent State University, Ohio, and by other colleges and universities. Factors explaining the rise of adult learning on college campuses and demographic information on the current adult student population in colleges and universities are presented. Reasons for returning to school, and differences between traditional and non-traditional students are examined. Institutional, situational, and dispositional barriers confronting adult students are discussed, and strategies to overcome those barriers are offered. Current services for adult learners at Kent State University are described in relation to the barriers discussed in the preceding section. Results of a survey of 31 institutions of higher education concerning their services to adult students are summarized as they respond to the institutional, situational and dispositional barriers. Differences among the institutions surveyed are examined, and recommendations for changes and for implementing changes at Kent State University are provided. The adult services questionnaire used in the survey is appended. (LLL)

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Student Services for Adult Learners

Martha A. Silling

Kent State University

Spring, 1984

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The number of adults taking advantage of opportunities in higher education is increasing at a staggering rate. Between 1970 and 1980, adults in college between the ages of 30 and 34 increased by 179% (Babcock, 1982). Currently, a full one-third of all students taking credit courses are age 25 or older. If the current trend continues, there will be nearly as many adult students in our colleges and universities by 1990 as there are students of the more traditional age ("Grownups on Campus", 1981).

Programming at the majority of institutions of higher learning is designed to meet the needs of students between the ages of 18 and 22. In order to accomodate the special needs of the increasing adult student population , improvements in and additions to current student services are essential. Before an institution can implement these changes, however, those involved in the change strategy must understand how adult students differ from traditional students, what distinctive barriers confront adult students, and what services can be established to overcome these barriers.

Kent State University currently has a large adult student enrollment and predictions have been made that the number of adult learners on campus will continue to increase rapidly. However, Kent State does not have a strategic plan for modifying student services to accomodate this population of students. A survey sent to many other colleges and universities in Ohio indicates that while some other institutions have few services for adult students, others have designed their services specifically for use by adults. This paper will describe the findings of the survey and focus in particular on innovative ideas that may be appropriate to implement at Kent State or similar institutions of higher education.

In conclusion, this paper will consider potential barriers to implementation of changes in student services, how to determine the amount of potential support

on campus for change, and the long-term benefits of improved services for adult students at the institution.

I. Influences on Adult Education in the 1980's and 1990's

There are a number of factors that can explain why there has been such a rise in the numbers of adult students on our campuses. These same factors can assist us to predict enrollment trends in the next ten to fifteen years. Apps (1980) identified six:

Changing Population Structure

The median age in the United States is now approximately 31. This is up from a median age of 28.8 in 1975. At the current rate, the median age in the U.S. by 1990 will be 32.8. As the number of adults over the age of 25 increases, the number of adults in higher education will also increase.

Colleges and universities in many areas have already begun to aggressively recruit older students. This has generally been done in response to declining numbers of potential students aged 18-21. According to Hechinger (1975), the numbers of Americans aged 18-21 were at an all-time high of 17 million between 1975 and 1980, but by 1990 the number in this age range will have shrunk to 13.5 million. If these predictions prove to be valid, many institutions of higher learning will have to rely on adult students if they are to continue to operate.

Inflation and Recession

The economic fluctuations which have been experienced in the U.S. have greatly affected the numbers of adults in higher education. Some adults have lost jobs within industries which are being phased out and have found it necessary to re-train for new occupations. Others find that promotions and salary increases are dependent upon new skills or earned degrees. Increased living costs have lead to a dramatic increase in the number of two-career couples. Women who left the job market to rear children are returning to work to add to their families' incomes, often preceeded by coursework at a local college or university to make themselves more marketable to potential employers.

Due to economic changes, a number of private corporations have found it advantageous to provide their employees with educational opportunities in the work setting. In some instances, the teaching is coordinated between the company and a local school. In the near future, however, this type of education in non-school settings may be conducted independently. In this case, private corporations will be in direct competition with colleges and universities for adult learners, further reducing enrollment figures already suffering from declines in the number of traditional students available.

The Consumer Movement

As consumers, adults paying tuition expect a certain "return" for their money, much as they would if they were purchasing material goods. In addition to expecting a certain number of hours in the classroom for their money, they demand quality teaching and special services as a secondary benefit. Whereas younger students tend to adapt their expectations and behavior to fit in with the established academic status quo, adult learners will force institutions to adapt to their needs if they are to be retained in large numbers.

Status of Women

Women aged 35 and older are returning to education by the millions. As a result of the women's movement, women are much more accepted as part of the labor market. Many are returning to school in order to change careers, others as a result of divorce or to reduce the boredom of being at home after children are in school or grown. The women's movement has made it much more acceptable for women to seek self-sufficiency and meaning in their lives. Middle-aged women represent the fastest-growing student population in the last several years and will probably continue to be as long as new roles and opportunities for women are being explored within our society.

Politics

Changes in state and federal political administrations have a direct effect

on the numbers of adults who enroll in higher education programs. For example, state and federal monies to higher education in the form of institutional subsidies and financial aids to students have been steadily decreasing in recent years despite increases in costs. This has kept many adults from either beginning or continuing their education. Tight budgets have also meant that educational institutions have been unable to expand their programs and services for adult students, in many cases. When considered in light of the expectations of adult students as consumers, this has further discouraged a number of adults from higher education.

A Mixed Mood Toward Education

The type of educational programs offered to adult students will affect the numbers of adults attracted to higher education. Many adults are in favor of an education that is practical and can be quickly applied to a career. Others want a broad background and preparation for lifelong learning. The emphasis in our society on one area over another seems to change periodically. Institutions that can maintain flexibility and offer programs to meet both sets of expectations will no doubt attract larger numbers of adult learners. Other institutions many choose to specialize in one area over another depending on the desires of the potential adult market in their area.

II. Characteristics of Adult Students

It may be helpful at this point to provide some demographic information on the current adult student population in our colleges and universities. In his book The Adult Learner on Campus, Apps (1981) provides some interesting insights. He found that adult students are predominantly female, white, and between the ages of 25 and 39. Adult students are from urban or suburban areas or small towns. They make up the highest percentage of college students in the Pacific coast states and the lowest percentage in the southeast region of the United States. Although hispanics are represented in proportion to the number of hispanics in the general population, blacks are underrepresented. Those women who are returning to school are likely to be divorced or never married and, if they have children, the children are usually younger than age eighteen.

Considering the factors affecting adult student enrollment trends, some of this data may change significantly in the next decade. For example, as the number of elderly in the U.S. increases, many may seek self-fulfillment and relief from boredom in college coursework, thereby changing the age range that most adult students fall into. In addition, problems of unemployment and the changing nature of the blue collar industries may encourage more men to look to college degrees for retraining. I do not foresee the percentage of blacks increasing unless the political climate changes so that additional funds become available to support lower-income adult students or unless black families become better represented in the middle and upper-income levels.

Reasons for Returning to School

The types of adults who are presently enrolled in higher education has a direct correlation to the reasons that adult students give for returning to school after an absence of a number of years. Four categories of reasons are

typically cited by adult learners. Although some individuals return for a specific reason, most return due to a combination of these factors:

Identity Crisis. According to Scott (1980), many adults are drawn to college in an attempt to develop a more far-reaching identity. During the middle-age years, individuals often question their own abilities and limitations, values and attitudes. In a collegiate environment, they seek a means to attain a better sense of themselves and expand their concept of how they fit into society.

Preparation for a Career. Most adult students cite preparation for a career as one of the most important reasons for continuing their education. Sometimes their goals are to learn new skills or earn degrees required for raises in salary or for promotions. Other times, returning to school is a defense against loneliness (for housewives in particular), and fulfills needs to prove their worth in roles besides those of housewife or mother.

Greater Realization of Potential. Many adults go to college because of an interest in developing a lifestyle that gives life more meaning and makes life more enjoyable. Many women begin college immediately after high school, but leave prior to earning a degree in order to get married and have children. Returning to school fulfills a need to complete this unfinished part of their lives (Letchworth, 1970) and provides an opportunity to develop a new set of relationships. Because our society places value on a college degree, increasing numbers of adults are seeking the status of being a college graduate (Scott, 1980).

Life Transitions. Apps (1981) cites a study completed by the College Board which found that 83% of adult students polled returned for a college education due to a major life transition. Many adults who are divorced or widowed seek new friendships, additional income-producing skills, and insurance for a more stable future. Others seek less tangible rewards such as skills in decision-making and assertiveness, or renewed belief in themselves as whole and adequate persons.

Traditional-age students generally cite preparation for a career and desire to move away from home as primary reasons for attending college. Many eighteen year olds learn a great deal about themselves while in college, but do not initially enroll with this as a goal as do adult students. Even preparing for a career is a different task for traditional students since it is their initial entry into the job market in most cases.

Many traditional students enroll in college in order to attain status as a college graduate but do not seek the same level of self-fulfillment that characterizes most adult learners. Also, while college is a life transition for young adults, going to school is not a result of a major life transition in the great majority of cases.

Differences Between Traditional and Non-Traditional Students

Once an adult student is enrolled, a number of differences from traditional-age students can be identified. Each of these differences impacts on teaching methods, evaluation techniques, and appropriate student support services for them. Table 1 briefly summarizes differences between the two groups of students. Several of these differences should be explored in more depth, however, since many go beyond the age differential between traditional and non-traditional students. Adult learners have a different perspective on life, a different sense of themselves, their time, what material is important to learn, and how they intend to use their education (Christensen, 1980). Perhaps these differences can best be categorized in this way:

Life Experiences. Adult learners generally have a broader sense of how theoretical education relates to the practical world of work and society than do traditional students. They also bring to the classroom a wealth of background knowledge from work or volunteer experiences. Part of the practical knowledge they have involves an ability to set goals, prioritize, and manage their time effectively. Adult learners tend to be more serious and committed to educational goals than are

Table 1

CHARACTERISTICS OF TRADITIONAL vs. NON-TRADITIONAL STUDENTS

TRADITIONAL STUDENT	NON-TRADITIONAL STUDENT
1. Continuing in school	1. Returning to school
2. Learning history strongly influenced by formal education	2. Learning history strongly influenced by informal education
3. Familiar with educational routine	3. Unfamiliar with educational routine and expectations
4. Primary time commitment to school as full-time student	4. Major time commitment to family and job; part-time student
5. Adequate communication and study skills	5. Frequent deficiencies in study and communication skills
6. Minimal work experience	6. Considerable relevant work experience
7. Micro frame of reference for a more orderly input of new ideas	7. Macro frame of reference based on life experiences which has both positive and negative implications for learning process
8. Frequently no clear vocational goal	8. Frequently clear vocational goal but not necessarily related to educational program
9. Educational goal is to receive a baccalaureate degree at minimum	9. Educational goal may be to receive a degree, but may also include some form of licensure or certification
10. Speed of performance and peer competitiveness affects learning activities	10. Concept mastery and accuracy of performance more important than competition--frequently viewed as threatening
11. High academic grades play significant role in obtaining meaningful employment	11. Academic grades are not significant in terms of present employment situation
12. Clear idea of how he compares with academic performance of fellow students	12. No accurate basis on which to judge his academic potential

From "Traditional and adult students: A dichotomy," by D. R. Hameister, 1977, Lifelong Learning: The Adult Years, 4, p. 8.

their younger counterparts because of the relationship they see between education and self-fulfillment in a variety of areas (Apps, 1981).

Academic Behavior. With the exception of math and the natural sciences, adult students average grades ten percent higher than those of traditional students. Oftentimes, however, they return to formal education with poor or rusty skills, particularly in communication and studying. They tend to resent the bureaucracy they must cope with, particularly in larger institutions.

Adults become used to informal learning approaches while absent from school (TV, newspapers, social activities, etc.). The return to formal learning approaches and academic routines and regulations is often a difficult adjustment. Because of their background experiences, adults are more likely to question the material being presented to them by instructors and may need assistance understanding the relevance of the new learning to their own lives.

Types of Problems Facing Adult Students. Adult learners typically have a number of problems that may negatively impact on their educational experience without some intervention by counselors or attention from faculty members. For example, many adults who are undergoing a life transition have a poor self-image and family problems. Those seeking immediate rewards in their career may come to college with unrealistic expectations and an excessively practical orientation. For others, many years out of school has deteriorated skills in writing or mathematics or study habits making initial adjustment to coursework a frustrating and sometimes negative experience (Apps, 1981).

Barriers Confronting Adult Students

Stalford (1978) identified a number of barriers that face adult students. Some barriers have to do with practical limitations which prospective and current students must overcome; these are called situational barriers. They include lack of money, transportation, and child care. Most adults in Stalford's sample cited situational barriers as the most difficult to overcome.

Dispositional barriers are self-imposed psychological barriers. For example, many adults have a lack of confidence in their own abilities which leads to fear of failure and fear of competing with younger students. Others must overcome guilt feelings they have about neglecting the family or spending part of the family income on education for themselves.

Institutional barriers can be the most frustrating for adult students because they have no control over them, yet they dramatically affect their ability to initially return to school or adjust once they have enrolled. High tuition is a major institutional barrier for many adult students, especially because financial aids are not readily available to them. Practices and procedures such as inconvenient scheduling, poor selection of majors to choose from in evening or weekend programs, and inadequate student services for adults are other institutional barriers facing adult learners.

III. Services Needed to Help Overcome Barriers Faced by Adult Students

A number of very specific services and programs are available to colleges and universities to assist adult learners to overcome the barriers they face when returning to school. This section describes these services.

To Overcome Situational Barriers

Lack of money is a major obstacle to continuing an education for many adults. Typically, adults take less than a full-time course load, making them ineligible for most forms of aid. Even if an adult does attend full-time, total family income is often too high for grants and loans especially since not all expenses are taken into consideration when eligibility is determined. In order to assist students to overcome this barrier, financial aids offices need to develop new sources of aid for adults and establish new criteria for eligibility (i.e.; include child care as an expense to be considered). In addition, institutions who continue to charge a higher credit-hour fee for part-time students than full-time students are discriminating against the majority of older students who can only attend part-time. Cessation of this practice would assist adults to overcome the major problem of lack of money (Geisler & Thrush, 1975).

As I indicated earlier, women between the ages of 25 and 39, many of whom have children younger than age 18, currently make up the majority of adult students on campuses. Many of them must make child care arrangements to enable them to take classes and find time to study. Convenient, low-cost, quality child care needs to be provided by the university or in cooperation with community agencies. The centers should be on or close to campus, and need to be staffed late afternoons and evenings as well as during the day. Those campuses who do not currently have child care facilities available should make

a commitment to a plan of action to develop appropriate facilities (Brandenburg, 1974).

Transportation is often a problem for returning adult students, particularly on those campuses that are not serviced by public transportation companies. Parking should be convenient to classroom buildings, and either free or inexpensive. For those without cars, transportation from the surrounding communities to campus needs to be convenient and timely. Well-lit parking lots and good security is also an important consideration for those adults taking evening classes.

To Overcome Dispositional Barriers

A variety of counseling interventions can assist students to overcome dispositional barriers associated with returning to school. Initially, outreach programs for prospective students can extend recruitment and counseling services into community locations such as public libraries. The information provided in the "safe" environment may give them the confidence they need to enroll in coursework at a later time (Geisler and Thrush, 1975).

Once admitted, these same students should be provided with a formal orientation, the primary purpose of which is to build confidence in themselves and to reduce anxiety about their upcoming college experience. The orientation should include testing in math and english to insure correct placement in these basic courses. A session on study skills is essential, as well as a tour of the campus. If possible, new adult students should have an opportunity to meet with faculty and other adult students in an informal atmosphere. An orientation of this type will assist adult students to develop positive perceptions of themselves as college students (Center for Research and Development in Higher Education [CRDHE], 1979).

Academic and career counseling should be available to adult students from the time of their initial enrollment until they complete the programs of their

choice. New students need a great deal of assistance making course selections, setting academic goals, and determining the applicability of various degree programs to the job market. Working closely with an academic advisor at this point can help students develop confidence in their academic abilities and decision-making skills.

As adult students progress through their academic programs, career counseling becomes increasingly important. Career decisions must be made on the basis of reasonable expectations of employment with respect to age, sex, and job outlook in their home communities (Geisler & Thrush, 1975). By assimilating career counseling into the advising provided to adult students throughout their programs, they should experience fewer problems associated with unrealistic expectations of their education.

In order to increase employment opportunities available to adult students after graduation, career counselors need to become advocates for adult graduates by persuading prospective employers that adults have special skills and assets which they could take advantage of if they would only be willing to adjust their schedule of operations, routine patterns, and attitudes about mature employees (Scott, 1980).

Personal counseling can make the biggest difference to adult learners in their struggle to overcome dispositional barriers. Counselors who are sensitive to the special needs and problems of adults can help them to deal with issues such as lack of self-confidence, lack of sense of direction, guilt over "neglecting" their families, resistance by family members to continuing their education, and their own self-defeating thoughts and behaviors (Geisler & Thrush, 1975).

Other personal support services may also be important to adult students. Some institutions have a formal peer counseling program in which others who have experienced the same difficulties aid others to adjust to the collegial

environment and lifestyle. Adult student organizations can also provide this same type of support and encouragement (Rawlins, 1981).

Personal counselors on college campuses are in a unique position to evaluate and influence the climate on campus with regard to adult students. Generalizations made from a number of adult student counseling sessions and research on the retention of adults can lead to changes in institutional policies, programs, and activities which may decrease the problems adults have in adjustment to college.

To Overcome Institutional Barriers

Resource Centers, or brokerage centers as they are sometimes called, are centralized offices on campuses which provide information to current and prospective students on educational and career opportunities, institutional policies and procedures, and other services available on campus and in the community. Some resource centers provide a variety of services during evening and weekend hours which are usually taken care of by other offices (i.e.; tuition payment, registration, admissions). The staff in resource centers often act as advocates to help students cut through an institution's red tape (CRDHE, 1979).

Faculty attitudes toward adult students are often based on stereotypes. For example, women returning to school after several years of working in the home are often expected to have lesser career aspirations than traditional students. Because faculty are a key ingredient in providing a learning environment that is accepted by and useful to returning students, they need to be trained to respect the special needs of adults and adapt some of their classroom techniques to them. Attitude training for faculty may help adult students feel more welcome in the classroom and on campus (Tittle & Denker, 1980).

Admissions criteria at many institutions are the same for both traditional and non-traditional students. Depending on outdated transcripts and standardized

test scores that reflect rusty verbal and mathematics skills are not accurate or valid criteria for assessing the potential for success of an adult student. Using these methods also reinforces adults' fears and anxieties about returning to school. In order to overcome this obstacle, institutions need specialists to develop appropriate admissions criteria, evaluate past academic work, and assist adults through the red tape associated with admissions (Brandenburg, 1974).

It is essential that campuses that advertise evening and weekend educational programs for adults provide these same students access to the student services available to daytime students. Too often, these offices are open hours which are convenient for the staff without regard for the convenience of the students. In order to attract and retain adult learners, this very basic institutional barrier must be overcome. This is particularly obvious in light of the need many adults have for these services to assist them to overcome dispositional barriers (Rawlins, 1981).

Major changes in ways to earn credit, scheduling of classes, and teaching techniques are important if institutions are to adapt to the special needs of adult students. Encouragement to earn college credit through examinations prepared by the College Level Examination Program, via credit-by-examination, or by awarding credit for life experiences would shorten the time required to earn a degree, reduce financial burdens, and give adult students a sense of accomplishment and recognition for their past personal achievements. If a wider variety of television and distance-education (correspondence) coursework was available and acceptable, problems associated with lack of transportation, time, or daycare would be reduced. Flexibility in scheduling courses should be explored. This might include experimentation with additional numbers of evening courses, classes that meet once a week for a longer time period, or very intensive courses offered in a time frame which is shorter than the traditional term (Tittle & Denker, 1980).

In the classroom itself, teaching styles should be adapted to the differences in learning styles between traditional and non-traditional students. Individualized, self-paced instruction is often appropriate. New methods of evaluation may be necessary and sharing of expertise among the students should be encouraged. Classroom changes will hopefully come about as a natural result of the aforementioned attitude training for faculty.

IV. Current Services for Adult Students at Kent State University

Kent State University currently has an adult undergraduate student population of 2853, or 17.9% of the total number of students on the Kent campus. (Adult students are defined as those students aged 25 or older.) Of these, approximately 60% are enrolled in coursework during the daytime and 40% attend exclusively during the evenings or on weekends. Four Colleges--Arts and Sciences, Business Administration, Fine and Professional Arts, and Education--offer a total of nineteen majors in an Evening and Weekend College program. The College of Arts and Sciences has the largest number of adult students enrolled, followed by Fine and Professional Arts, Business Administration, and Education (College of Special Programs, 1983).

Kent State offers a number of services which are helpful to adult students in overcoming situational, dispositional, or institutional barriers.

To Overcome Situational Barriers

Financial Aids. Few students who are part-time or above a pre-set family income level are eligible for state or federal grants or scholarships. Kent is unable to change these criteria. A number of scholarships are offered on the Kent State campus. I am aware of one, through Mortar Board, which is exclusively for adult students. Adult students are not prohibited from applying for other university scholarships and, in some cases, unusual expenses such as child care are considered when determining need. Although source books on private scholarships are available to students, the financial aids office on campus does not actively seek new forms of aid for adult students.

Part-time students are charged more per credit hour than are full-time students. The 1983-84 undergraduate catalog lists part-time tuition and fees at $70.25 per credit hour. A full-time student carrying fifteen hours of coursework, however, is charged only $57.06 per credit hour.

Child Care. Kent State currently has a high-quality, relatively low-cost child care center on campus. The Child Development Center is unable to serve all of the parents requesting use of the Center. Unfortunately, space and funding concerns have not only made expansion impossible, but the Center is in jeopardy of being closed by the University in the near future.

Several other agencies in the Kent community provide child care services. Quality and cost of these services are variable. A listing of these agencies is made available to students upon request in the College of Special Programs. Few have evening and weekend hours.

Transportation. Kent State has an excellent bus system that serves the campus and the community. The buses may be used by students at no charge. If students commute to the campus from a long distance or from an area not served by the bus system, they often find that parking on the campus is a problem. During the daytime, students must park at a great distance from campus or pay a substantial daily fee in a centralized parking lot. Evening students may park in lots convenient to classroom buildings, but lighting is generally poor and security not highly visible.

To Overcome Dispositional Barriers

Outreach. The College of Special Programs did a great deal of outreach in the past under the auspices of a program called Project Dove. The program provided counseling to residents in the community, primarily about career decision-making, job opportunities, and availability of educational programs. Numbers of adults who were counseled through Project Dove subsequently enrolled in coursework at Kent State. Funds for the program were cut off in 1980. Project Dove, therefore, no longer exists at Kent.

Other outreach programs are sporadically undertaken by a variety of units on campus. The College of Special Programs sends representatives from the Evening and Weekend College to college fairs for adults and occasionally to area

businesses, libraries, and public schools. Representatives from other offices on campus also make visits of this type, but only when asked by a business or agency in the community to do so. On-campus recruiting programs, such as Academic Discovery Days, are designed for high school students.

Continuing education programs have traditionally encouraged adults in the community to "test out" college coursework without fear. These courses teach basic skills, are ungraded, are offered at low cost, and often are taught quite informally. Many adults who first come onto campus for a continuing education course are encouraged by the experience to continue their formal education. Kent State has radically changed the format of its continuing education program. The focus is now on a program that is coordinated with the academic units and appears to be more formalized than the past program. The effect on adult student enrollment in degree programs has yet to be evaluated.

Orientation. Evening and weekend students who enroll at Kent State have a brief orientation program. During the four hours allotted for the orientation, students are tested for basic math skills, receive academic advising, and register for courses. Several years ago, orientation programs for evening and weekend students were held on Saturdays. The programs were sponsored by the College of Special Programs and were more extensive in their coverage than is the current program. Spouses were invited to attend and students had an opportunity to meet informally with faculty and other adult students. The Saturday orientations were discontinued when Orientation became the responsibilities of the Colleges in 1979.

Last Fall semester, a semester-long orientation program was offered to adult students attending classes during the day[illegible]. This was the first program of its type on campus. Topics covered included [illegible] skills, career awareness and decision-making, overcoming anxiety in the classroom, time management, and coping with family issues. Long-term benefits of this type of program included

the formation of an adult student organization on campus. The program was successful in a number of ways and will be offered again next Fall. The course was designed and taught by two academic advisors from the academic units who have a special interest in the needs of adult students on campus. Because there is no particular office or staff on campus responsible for the orientation on a long-term basis, the program will probably be discontinued when the two current instructors are no longer able or willing to teach it.

Academic and Career Counseling. The Evening and Weekend College staff provides academic advising and career counseling to students at the time they initially enter the University. The staff is sensitive to adult needs and scheduling concerns. The academic units generally have not identified advisors who have special expertise or knowledge to continue this advising of nontraditional students throughout the balance of their degree programs.

Many of the academic advisors on campus are unable to provide information to students regarding job outlooks in their home communities or the realities of sex and age discrimination within certain professions. Although counselors in the Career Planning and Placement Center have access to this information, the Center's focus on placement and its very small staff makes it difficult to schedule an appointment before a student's junior or senior year. This makes it difficult for a number of adult students at Kent to make informed academic decisions and may lead to frustration when seeking positions at the culmination of their educational programs. There is little advocacy for placement of adults with local employers primarily as a result of the understaffed Career Planning and Placement Center.

Personal Counseling. Individual personal counseling for adult students at Kent State is available at the Counseling and Group Resources Center or The Guidance Bureau. Both services are free, although initial appointments often take several weeks to obtain due to staffing problems. An organization for

adult students is currently being formed as a result of the Orientation course taught last Fall. This organization will provide informal peer counseling and support for adult students.

No coordinated advocacy for adult students and recommendations for improved services for them has been forthcoming from the personal counselors on campus. Several interested advisors from the academic units and the College of Special Programs, however, are in the process of identifying needs of nontraditional students as they relate to the issue of retention. This may result in a series of formal recommendations for change.

To Overcome Institutional Barriers

Resource Centers. Kent State's Evening and Weekend College office is a resource center for adult students attending classes during the evenings or on weekends. The staff in this office admits students, provides academic advising, and informs students of institutional policies, procedures, programs, and services. The staff collects tuition payments and assists students to register during hours which the Bursar's Office or the Registrar's Office is closed. The Evening and Weekend College Office encourages other units within the University to expand their course offerings and student services to benefit evening and weekend students. There is no central resource center for adult students enrolled in coursework during the daytime hours.

Faculty Training. The Evening and Weekend College provides a program for part-time faculty who are teaching during the evenings or on weekends. This program includes a discussion of how adult students differ from traditional students and teaching techniques that work best for them. Unfortunately, full-time faculty who have adults in their classrooms both during the day and in the evenings do not participate in this program.

Admissions. Kent State has made great strides in adapting admissions criteria to adult students. Standardized test scores are not required for admission for

students over the age of 21. High school transcripts are required primarily to verify high school completion. Students who have completed coursework at other colleges or universities a number of years in the past and who did poorly at that time often have special considerations made when their admissions status is determined. The Evening and Weekend College office admists most of the students who enroll exclusively in evening and weekend coursework, insuring that these adults receive the expertise and counseling from a staff that understands their fears and concerns about returning to school.

Extended Hours for Support Services. In addition to the Evening and Weekend College office, Kent State has evening hours in three offices on a year-round basis. The Career Planning and Placement Center has walk-in hours one night per month; the College of Business provides academic advising one evening per week; the Guidance Bureau is open evenings by appointment. In addition, the College of Business has advising appointments available two Saturdays per month, and the Admissions Office is open on occasional Saturdays. The following offices have evening hours during registration periods: Registrar, Bursar, Financial Aids, Parking and Traffic. The majority of the Colleges' advising offices and the Health Center do not have evening or weekend hours. Many offices are also closed during the lunch hour which is the only other time many evening and weekend students are able to take care of business on campus.

Changes in Ways to Earn Credit, Scheduling of Classes, Teaching and Evaluation Techniques. Kent encourages students to pursue credit in several non-traditional ways. CLEP (College Level Examination Program) exams are given on a monthly basis on campus, although the newest curricular requirements limit CLEP credits severely. Credit by examination is available for a wide variety of courses. Credit for life experiences is not accepted by a number of departments on campus, discouraging adult students from attempting to earn credit in this way.

Kent State does not offer credit through distance-education coursework or via television. (A TV course was attempted recently for an Introductory to Psychology course. Problems with publicity, registration, and availability of time on the local educational television channel resulted in relatively low enrollment for the course. The department chose not to offer the course via television a second time.)

The staff in the Evening and Weekend College have worked with various departments on campus to encourage greater flexibility in scheduling of coursework for adults in the Evening and Weekend program. Courses are available one night a week, several nights per week, on Saturday mornings or afternoons, and sometimes on Sunday afternoons. Evening classes are scheduled in such a way that students can attend two classes on a given evening, thereby reducing the time they must spend commuting to campus for coursework.

In the classroom, there is a wide variety of teaching styles and evaluation techniques used. Some instructors encourage discussion in their classes to enable students to share their background experiences and expertise with others. Others give students a great deal of individual assistance. A number of instructors, however, depend heavily on traditional lecture and testing styles. A particularly difficult assignment for adult students involves group projects, a technique used frequently in many courses within the University.

Services Available for Adult Students at Some Other Colleges and Universities

In order to determine what services some other institutions of higher education offer to adult students, a survey was sent to forty schools in the State of Ohio. Thirty-one surveys were returned, a response rate of 78%. The responses included information from eight large state institutions, eight small private institutions, eight two-year colleges, and seven branch campuses of Kent State University. A copy of the survey may be found in the appendix. I have also included in this summary information from an unpublished dissertation (Fauquet, 1983) and several other sources on adult student services available at some other colleges and universities located elsewhere in the country.

To Overcome Situational Barriers

Situational barriers are those practical limitations which prospective and current adult students must overcome in order to return to school or continue their education (Stalford, 1978). They include lack of money, lack of child care, and lack of transportation.

Financial Aid. The Ohio survey on student services did not address the topic of financial aids for adult students. Fauquet (1983) surveyed Directors of Admissions from 76 colleges and asked them to identify techniques and strategies that they believed would encourage adult students to attend their institutions. The majority of the respondents agreed that adult students should be included in the student financial aid planning of the institution and that making payment plans more flexible was highly needed. It was also suggested that adult students should not have to pay for student services that are not available when they take classes. Other suggestions made by Fauquet's respondents included offering discounts or fee waivers to part-time adult students and

offering free courses of short duration to entice prospective adult students to campus.

Child Care. The majority of the two-year colleges surveyed provide child care for use by adult students. All charge a relatively small amount, ranging between 75¢ and $1.30 an hour. Only one two-year school has evening hours in the daycare center, however.

Of the eight small private institutions responding to the survey, only one provides child care and that is by special arrangement only on the weekends. None have child care facilities on campus. Two large state institutions indicated that they have child care facilities on campus; both are open from 7:30 a.m. until 10 p.m. during the week. One Kent State regional campus has child care available, and that is open from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. on weekdays.

Transportation. A survey by the College of Special Programs (1982) of ten schools in northeastern Ohio indicates that those colleges and universities who are serviced by public transportation companies charge to park on campus. Evening or part-time students were generally charged less than daytime full-time students. Rural schools which have no public transportation available (and more room for parking facilities) do not charge to park on campus. Amount of lighting and security in the parking lots varies a great deal, but is often inadequate to insure the safety of evening students.

To Overcome Dispositional Barriers

Dispositional barriers are self-imposed psychological barriers such as lack of confidence, guilt feelings about spending less time with family, and fear of competition with younger students (Stalford, 1978).

Outreach. Specialized recruiting techniques are often needed to give adults the confidence they need to enroll in a formal educational program. All of the institutions surveyed indicated that they actively recruit adult students for their degree programs. A wide variety of methods is used to accomplish

this. Each institution uses media resources. According to Reisser (1980), the media is one of the most effective recruiting tools for adult students as long as strategies are developed to portray the institution's sensitivity to the needs of adult learners. For example, local newspapers should be encouraged to feature articles on adult students who are graduating or faculty who are using innovative teaching techniques. Television and radio talk-shows or advertisements should be used to discuss degree programs and services available to adults, as well as to promote the school's image as an enjoyable place to be.

Continuing education programs are a major recruiting tool primarily in the two-year schools according to the findings of the survey. College fairs were used for recruiting in the majority of the two-year and small, private schools as well as at the Kent State branch campuses. Most of the large four-year institutions do not use this method of outreach for adults. Nearly every institution surveyed made presentations on a regular basis at area businesses and corporations to attract adult students to their educational programs. Being available to speak to potential students in public libraries, at churches, and at a variety of clubs and organizations is also an important outreach technique at the majority of those institutions surveyed. Reisser (1980) recommends regular contact with churches, women's groups, professional associations, and senior citizen organizations because of their value as referral sources.

A number of other outreach techniques designed to make adults feel more at ease about returning to school were mentioned by those responding to the survey. One large state institution uses a direct-mail campaign for residents in the community. Two institutions have a program for women in the community that they hope will encourage homemakers to return to school. One Kent State regional campus uses telephone follow-ups to give support and

encouragement to adults who wrote to the college for information on education programs available. Although each of the institutions surveyed have promotional brochures available for prospective students, not all are designed specifically to appeal to adults. Reisser (1980) suggests that these publications should answer frequently asked questions, describe services available for adult students, and be conscientious about making adults feel comfortable and confident about returning to school. Several of Fauquet's (1983) survey respondents recommended using the Welcome Wagon to distribute promotional literature to new residents of the community.

Reisser (1980) describes several outreach courses that have been attempted by a variety of institutions. Those that were most successful focused on topics of current interest to adults and reinforced the idea of learning as a relevant and enjoyable activity for individuals of all ages. For example, South Dakota State University invited 300 senior citizens to campus for a one-day program. They were able to sample a variety of mini-courses, participate in a crafts fair, and attend a concert. As a result of the program, an advisory council was formed to make the educational needs of the senior citizens known to university officials and to help encourage additional older adults to enroll in coursework at the University.

Orientation. Orientation programs should assist adults to build confidence in themselves and reduce their anxiety about their college experience. The majority of the institutions surveyed have a separate orientation program available for adult students. The topics covered in the orientations varied, however. None of the small private schools incorporate skills testing into the program, while the majority of the other institutions do. Study skills workshops were available at half of the institutions of each type. Academic advising was emphasized more in the orientation programs at the two-year and large state institutions than at the small private colleges. Introducing the

adult students to campus facilities was part of nearly every orientation program. Two of the two-year colleges offer a special orientation program for women returning to school. These programs were longer than the orientation programs for other students and incorporated personal and career counseling into the program.

In addition to these topics, one small private college included a workshop on time management into its orientation program, and two small private colleges addressed the topic of non-traditional ways to earn credit. In addition to these topical areas, Rawlins and Lenihan (1982) recommend that orientation programs for adults incorporate information on university policies and acquisition of skills to negotiate the institution's bureaucracy.

None of the respondents indicated that new adult students were given an opportunity to meet with faculty or experienced adult students in an informal atmosphere.

Academic and Career Counseling. Academic and career counseling for adults should be provided in order to help the adult learner set realistic academic goals, learn career decision-making skills, and develop reasonable expectations of post-graduate employment. The survey did not request information on specialized academic or career counseling services for adult students. Fauquet (1983) found that a number of these services are highly needed. They include availability of academic counseling geared especially for adult students, mini-workshops on careers, career counseling to assist adults with mid-life career changes or loss of employment, internships and cooperative arrangements to aid adults to gain experience and information about careers, and placement counseling geared to adult students. Brandenburg (1974) recommends that academic and career counselors work with the alumni association on campus to identify graduates who are willing to serve as career consultants for the current adult student population.

Personal Counseling. Personal counseling is an essential service for adults struggling to overcome dispositional barriers. Most institutions have personal counseling centers, but few appear to have counselors who have been specially trained to work with adult students. One study (College of Special Programs, 1982) found that few Ohio institutions have formalized peer counseling programs for adults or adult student organizations. However, the respondents to Fauquet's (1983) survey indicated that both peer counseling and adult student organizations were highly needed to assist adult learners to adjust to the collegial environment and lifestyle. Several institutions have developed formalized counseling support groups for adult students. Eastern Illinois University, for example, offers a series of lifeskills seminars each semester. Topics have included single parenting, coping with depression, and assertiveness training. A counseling center staff member leads the group (Rawlins and Lenihan, 1982).

To Overcome Institutional Barriers

Institutional barriers such as high tuition, inconvenient scheduling of classes, poor evening or weekend program selection, and inadequate student services for adults are especially frustrating for adults because they have no control over these limitations, yet each affects their ability to return to school or adjust once they have enrolled (Stalford, 1978).

Resource Centers. Resource centers serve a dual purpose on campuses. They are a centralized location for a number of student services for adults, especially during evening and weekend hours when many other student service offices are closed. The staff in resource centers also serve as advocates for adult students on campus. The two-year schools surveyed have the best resource centers in a way because all of the regular student service offices are in a centralized location and are geared for adult students. Most two-year schools have evening and weekend hours for these services and large professional staffs of ten to fifteen counselors.

In contrast, most small private colleges offer only admissions, advising, and registration at their resource centers and only two have weekend hours. Of the six small colleges who have resource centers, five have evening hours available. The average number of professional staff in the resource centers in small private colleges is two. Seven of the large state institutions surveyed have resource centers. Most offer only academic and career counseling. Although six have evening hours, only two offer weekend service to adults. The average number of professional staff members is between five and six. Kent State's branch campuses rely on centralized service centers as do the two-year schools surveyed. Six have evening hours; none have weekend hours. Each campus has a professional staff of two or three providing the bulk of the student services offered.

Two of the institutions surveyed indicated that their resource center (or centralized service center) offered other special services for adults. One of the two-year schools provides tutoring for its adult students; a respondent for a large state institution expressly mentioned advocacy for adult students as one of its primary functions.

Attitude Training for Faculty and Staff. Few of the campuses surveyed assist faculty to learn about adult students and how to adapt their classroom techniques to serve them. Three of the two-year colleges have a training session of this type for faculty, and one also provided periodic in-service staff development programs for faculty on the topic of adult learners. Two small private colleges, and two large state institutions, and one branch campus at Kent State provides attitude training for faculty.

Several of the two-year institutions surveyed claim not to need sessions to improve faculty sensitivity to adult students because their faculty are already sensitized due to the large numbers of adults enrolled in their classes each semester. Fauquet (1983) found that improvement of faculty awareness of the needs of older students was always needed.

Admissions Criteria. Developing valid criteria for predicting success of adults in college and assisting adults through the red tape associated with admissions will overcome several major institutional barriers for adult students. The respondents to Fauquet's (1983) survey recommended waiving standardized tests as entrance requirements, simplifying admissions procedures, and admitting older students provisionally to allow them to prove themselves. It was also recommended that special counselors be trained to assist with admissions of adults.

Evening and Weekend Hours for Services. In order to attract and retain adult learners, colleges and universities who have evening and/or weekend courses and programs must offer student services during the evenings or on weekends. Of the thirty-one schools responding to the survey, only two have neither an evening or a weekend program for adult learners; one is a small, private institutuion and one is a large state university. However, a number of schools do not offer services during the times these programs are offered. Large state institutions were the worst offenders; four indicated that they had weekend programs, but no weekend hours for their student services, and one had an evening program with no evening services. The two-year institutions and the Kent State regional campuses all offer student services during the times evening and weekend programs are in operation.

Table 2 summarizes the average number of evening and weekend hours available for seven different student services at the surveyed institutions. Two-year institutions offer more services during a greater number of non-traditional hours than do the other types of schools. Small private colleges have the fewest number of services available during evening and weekend time periods, and those services that are available are open fewer hours than the services at other institutions.

One institution surveyed indicated that all student services were

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Table 2.

Service Provided	Average Number of Evening & Weekend Hours Available at Two-Year Institutions*	Average Number of Evening & Weekend Hours Available at Small Private Institutions*	Average Number of Evening & Weekend Hours Available at Large State Institutions*	Average Number of Evening & Weekend Hours Available at Kent State Regional Campuses*	Average Number of Evening & Weekend Hours Available at All Institutions Surveyed*	Total Number of Institutions Offering the Services During Evening Hours++	Total Number of Institutions Offering the Services During Weekend Hours++
Personal Counseling	11	0	3	8	8	17	4
Academic Advising	12	8	7	8	9	21	7
Bursar	15	3	0	8	10	10	4
Registrar	12	3	10	8	9	17	5
Financial Aids	11	0	2	6	8	15	5
Admissions	12	3.5	5.5	9	10	16	9
Placement	10	2	2.5	7	7.5	12	4

*Includes only those institutions offering the service during evening or weekend hours.

++Of the institutions surveyed, 26 have evening programs and 11 have weekend programs.

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coordinated in such a way that they were all open one evening a week for the same period of time. This means that adult students who have business to take care of on campus can plan to come to campus and accomplish all of their tasks on this evening, rather than returning at another time. This would also improve the efficiency of those offices who are open. For example, an advising office would have access to information from the records office and the placement center, and could refer students directly to financial aids or admissions if necessary rather than offering to "get back" to the student at a later time with requested information.

Changes in Ways to Earn Credit, Scheduling of Classes, and Teaching Techniques. Accepting more credits earned through non-traditional means will encourage more adults to continue their education because of the reduced time required to earn a degree, the financial savings involved, and the recognition given for past accomplishments. There are a number of non-traditional ways to earn credit. The most popular are via the College Level Examination Program (CLEP), through the credit-by-examination process, or by awarding credit for life experiences. All of the institutions surveyed permit adult students to apply CLEP or credit-by-examination credit toward their degree programs, although this is sometimes done only on a very limited basis. Awarding credit for life experience is not as popular, although five two-year, seven small, private colleges, and six large state institutions surveyed not only accept this type of credit but assist students to evaluate the skills they have learned for this purpose.

As mentioned in the previous section, twenty-six of the colleges and universities surveyed have courses available during the evenings and eleven have weekend courses for adult students. This flexibility in scheduling makes it possible for adults who are employed to continue their education. Fauquet (1983) also recommends that increased numbers of courses be offered

during lunch hours, in the late afternoon, or as intensive two-week summer courses enabling working students to take vacation time to earn credit.

A number of teaching techniques are more effective with adult students than those used for traditional students. Courses offered over the television are increasing in popularity. They are currently available at five of the two-year schools surveyed and six of the large state universities. None of the surveyed small, private schools or Kent State regional campuses have incorporated TV courses into their curriculum. Hechinger (1975) describes an Instructional TV Network sponsored by Stanford University. Ten years ago, in 1974, more than 200 classroom courses were taught via TV and benefited more than 4000 off-campus students. The students taking the courses saved commuting time, daycare and transportation expenses, and found the course very convenient. Correspondence, or distance-education, courses are not as widely accepted. Only two of the schools surveyed permitted correspondence credit. The respondents to Fauquet's (1983) survey rated correspondence coursework as seldom needed to attract adult students to an institution.

Other teaching techniques that have been found to be effective with adult students include small tutorial sessions, computer-assisted instruction, and seminars to encourage class participation. Classes of ten to twelve seem to be ideal for adult students (Fauquet, 1983). Empire State College in New York State allows adult students to complete many of their course requirements by working at home following academic outlines individually designed for them (Hechinger, 1975). New York City's School for Social Research allows adult students and faculty to determine what courses will be offered and how they will be taught. Faculty are drawn from other academic institutions, the professional or business world, public affairs or the performaing arts. The faculty propose courses they wish to teach and the course is retained as long there is sufficient enrollment. If the class does not meet the interests and

needs of the adult students at the institution, enrollment usually drops below the required ten and the course is dropped (Maeroff, 1975).

Differences Among Institutions Surveyed

Table 3 summarizes the findings of the survey based on selected responses of thirty-one institutions in Ohio. In general, location of the institution and total size of the institution appear to bear little relationship to the services available for adult students. Schools with higher percentages of adult students had significantly more services available for adult students. It is unclear, however, if adults are attracted in larger numbers to schools which have more services for adults or if the schools have developed the better services in response to the larger number of adult learners already on campus.

Most two-year schools surveyed have child care, centralized service centers, orientation programs for adults, and evening and weekend hours for services. Less that 50% offer attitude training for faculty. Less than half of the small, private colleges and the large state institutions surveyed offer child care, faculty training, or evening or weekend hours for services. Most of these schools, however, do have resource centers and orientation programs for adult students. The branch campuses of Kent State all have centralized service centers and advising and financial aids counseling during the evenings. Few, if any, have child care, faculty training, evening hours for placement or personal counseling, or weekend hours for any services.

In summary, evening programs, centralized service centers, and orientation programs for adults have been established at most of the institutions surveyed. Evening services, particularly in the areas of academic advising and financial aids, are available at most two-year institutions but few evening or weekend services are widely available at four-year institutions. Weekend programs and services are not yet very popular, and faculty training and child care are rare except in two-year institutions.

Table 3

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SUMMARY of SELECTED SURVEY RESPONSES

Institution	Size	Location	Percentage of Students Who Are Over 25	Evening Program?	Weekend Program?	Central Service Center?	Child Care?	Faculty Training?	Orientation for Adults?	Evening & Weekend Hours For: Advising E	Advising W	Financial Aids E	Financial Aids W	Placement E	Placement W	Counseling E	Counseling W
Two-Year:																	
Cuyahoga Community College - Metro	7,640	urban	57%	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
" " " - West	12,000	suburban	55%	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				X	
" " " - East	5,929	suburban	56%	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X				
Lakeland Community College	9,600	suburban	73%	X		X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Lorain Community College	6,000	suburban	62%	X		X	X	X	X	X		X		X		X	
Sinclair Community College	18,000	urban	59%	X		X	X	X	X	X		X		X		X	
Bowling Green - Firelands	1,200	rural	50%	X		X				X				X		X	
University of Akron - Wayne	1,057	rural	not reported	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Small, Private:																	
Findlay	1,250	urban	30%	X	X	X		X	X	X							
John Carroll	3,500	suburban	not reported	X		X			X	X							
Walsh	1,200	suburban	33%	X		X			X	X						X	
Ursuline	1,478	suburban	64%	X		X			X	X						X	
Marietta	1,200	small town	11%	X		X			X	X				X		X	
Hiram	1,375	rural	18%		X	X	X		X		X		X		X		X
Mt. Union	1,000	small town	not reported					X									
Baldwin Wallace	3,499	suburban	52%	X	X				X								
Large, State:																	
University of Cincinnati	39,000	urban	37%	X	X	X											
Cleveland State University	18,500	urban	not reported	X	X	X		X	X							X	
University of Toledo	18,287	urban	27%	X		X	X		X	X				X		X	
Ohio State University	53,757	urban	26%	X		X			X							X	
Ohio University	13,000	rural	15%		X	X			X								
Bowling Green State	14,000	small town	6%			X			X								
University of Akron	27,022	urban	34.5%	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	
Wright State University	15,500	urban	42%		X				X	X							
Kent State Regional:																	
Salem	625	rural	64%	X		X		X	X	X		X					
Geauga	320	rural	60%	X		X				X		X					
Ashtabula	980	small town	51%	X		X			X	X		X					
Trumbull	1,600	urban	48%	X		X				X		X				X	
Tuscarawas	1,000	rural	40%	X		X			X	X		X		X			
E. Liverpool	700	small town	36%	X		X			X	X		X		X		X	
Stark	2,000	suburban	20%	X		X	X			X		X				X	
Kent State - Kent Campus	15,975	small town	17.9%	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X		X	

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VI. Recommendations for Change at Kent State University

Currently, Kent State's adult student enrollment of 2,853 represents 17.9% of the total number of students on campus. We are comparable to the Eastern campus of Cuyahoga Community College in the number of students we have over the age of 25 and comparable to Hiram, Ohio University, and the Stark campus of Kent State in the total number of adult students enrolled. Kent State is comparable in total size (± 4000) to Sinclair Community College, the Western campus of Cuyahoga Community College, Bowling Green State University, Wright State University, Cleveland State University, and the University of Toledo.

The majority of the institutions listed above have evening or weekend programs; Kent State has both an evening and a weekend program. Most provide a special orientation program for adults; Kent does too, although it is rather limited in time and scope. All of the comparable institutions have resource centers or centralized service centers; Kent's Evening and Weekend College office provides most of the same services as these centers do. Some of the institutions similar to Kent State in one way or another have child care facilities on campus, evening hours for a number of services, and a faculty training program for faculty regarding the special needs of adult students; the services Kent does offer in these areas is very limited.

On the basis of the literature on the special needs of adult students and on the basis of the surveys sent to a number of Ohio colleges and universities, I recommend that Kent State implement the following improvements in services over the period of the next several years:

<u>Financial Aids</u>

1. The University should discontinue its policy of charging part-time students more per credit hour than full-time students.

2. The Financial Aids Office should develop new scholarships and other sources of aid for adult students, and adjust the eligibility criteria for existing university scholarships to be more favorable to adult students (i.e.; the type of expenses considered, part-time status).

Child Care

3. The Child Development Center should be continued with additional staff, space, and funding.

Transportation

4. Parking lots need better lighting during the evening hours.

Outreach

5. The new continuing education program should be monitored to determine if the programming is attracting adult students to campus.

6. The College of Special Programs should coordinate all outreach programs for adults, including visits to area businesses and libraries and media publicity.

Orientation

7. Evening and weekend student orientation should be the responsibility of the Evening and Weekend College and needs to be longer in length. New topics to be included are study skills, time management, and family concerns.

8. An orientation class for adults attending classes during the daytime which is similar to the one currently offered should be continued with budgetary support for staff, copying of materials, etc.

Academic and Career Counseling

9. Each collegial unit should train academic advisors (faculty as well as staff in the Deans' Offices) to work with adult students.

10. Internship opportunities, coordinated by the Career Planning and Placement Center, should be expanded for adult students.

11. Counselors at the Career Planning and Placement Center should become familiar with job opportunities in various careers in relation to age, sex, and local employment opportunities.

12. Counselors at the Career Planning and Placement Center should encourage area employers to consider hiring more adult graduates.

Resource Centers

13. The Evening and Weekend College should be expanded to serve as a coordinating agency for all services for adult learners. The professional staff should be increased accordingly. A change in name to the Office of Lifelong Learning may be appropriate.

Attitude Training for Faculty

14. All new faculty, part-time and full-time, should be required to attend a mandatory orientation program in which the special needs of adult students and the relationship to teaching techniques is discussed.

15. All faculty should be invited to attend periodic in-service training sessions on the topic of adult students, perhaps lead by a nationally-known adult educator.

Evening and Weekend Hours for Services

16. All offices on campus should remain open during the lunch hours.

17. Select services should expand their services to include some evening and weekend hours. Financial aids and academic advising are the most crucial services to expand. When the majority of the student service units are moved to the University School, requiring each office to be open on one particular evening may be feasible.

Changes in Ways to Earn Credit, Scheduling of Classes, and Teaching Techniques

18. Opportunities to assess and award credit for life experiences should be expanded.

19. Additional television courses should be offered through a variety of

departments. Concentration should be on freshman and sophomore level courses.

20. Additional funding for faculty to teach during the evenings and on weekends is essentia

VII. Implementing Change

Riggs (1981) recommends that advocates for adult students in institutions of higher education begin to push for change relatively slowly so as not to become adversarial with others on the campus. Identifying the nature, scope, and relative importance of various needs is essential. With this in mind, I have selected several services of crucial importance that advocates for improved adult student services at Kent State should begin with. If these recommendations were to be implemented, several situational, dispositional, and institutional barriers to adult students would be overcome.

The first improvement, and the most important in my opinion, is the establishment of a resource center for all adult students. Initially, its primary function should be advocacy for improvements and additions in adult student services and programming. The Center's director should coordinate all activities on campus concerned with these changes and work toward greater institutional support. Naming the resource center the Office for Lifelong Learning or something similar would assist both students and campus employees to understand the broad scope and function of the center.

Once the Center is established, the staff should coordinate an improved outreach program. If the numbers of adults enrolling in credit courses both during the daytime and in the evenings and on weekends are significantly increased, the central administration may then give an increased amount of support to expansion of services for this student population. Coordinating an outreach program with the collegial units also encourages support from the individuals involved at that level.

I also recommend that the newly created resource center take over the design of the orientation programs for both daytime and evening and weekend adult students. The current one-evening format should be reserved only for

the purposes of academic advising and registration. The orientation program itself should be one full Saturday for evening and weekend students and a semester-long course for adult students attending classes during the daytime. Both of these formats have been tried and found to be successful. Discussions concerning time management, family concerns, career decision-making, and study skills should be included in the orientation.

It is essential that evening and weekend hours for student support services be established. The first to be requested should be academic advising through the Deans' Offices in the collegial units. Another service which is necessary during the evenings and on weekends is financial aids counseling. I anticipate some resistance to these changes from those whose working hours would be affected. However, as new employees are hired in these areas with the expectation of working some non-traditional hours, this resistance will soon diminish. Other offices, such as individual departmental offices, must be encouraged to remain open during the lunch hours initially, and perhaps asked to remain open additional hours after the need for the increased service has been documented and institutional support for such a move has been strengthened.

The provision of child care facilities on campus is of secondary importance to these other changes, in my opinion. However, Kent State currently has a child care center which may be closed in the near future. Because it is almost always more difficult to establish a new service than to continue with an existing one, I encourage advocates for adult student services to push for the continued existence of the Child Development Center.

In order to implement these changes at Kent State, advocates for adult students must know the institution well. What are Kent State's goals and educational priorities? What objections may be raised and by whom? What are potential funding needs and sources? How will these changes be of long-term benefit to the university? What is the best way to develop institutional support for improvements in adult student services?

The best place to start is to identify a leader to direct the change strategy. This individual must be interpersonally effective and sensitive to the educational issues involved. The director must be politically astute and be in a position where he or she has credibility and acceptance among the different constituencies on campus. Having management and fiscal skills would also be an asset (Gilder, 1980).

Once a leader has been identified, he or she must determine who on campus is supportive of the proposed changes. Participation by a cross-section of the faculty and staff is essential, and establishment of a formal advisory group is advisable (Gilder, 1980). Riggs (1981) recommends that members of this advisory group be recruited on the basis of the power-base they have on campus and their ability to influence others as much as for their interest in adult students. For example, having senior level faculty involved will add credibility and clout. The advisory group should be charged with the responsibility of studying the institution, outlining specific changes to be sought, and planning ways to approach the administration.

The first charge of the advisory group, that of studying the institution, is a key step in the change strategy. One fundamental consideration is how much the university has acknowledged adult students as an important part of the university community. The mission statement of the institution shapes its long-range goals and objectives. Does the statement commit the university to the concept of life-long learning? The new mission statement at Kent State neglects to mention life-long learning or adult learners even vaguely. Because of this oversight, the advisory group would do well to begin with some consciousness-raising on campus (Gilder, 1980).

New programs for adult students cannot simply be imposed. Attitude changes must come about before skill development for faculty, for example, will be effective. In order to change attitudes regarding adult students, the advisory

group should target faculty, administrators, trustees, advisory and educational policy committees, and community groups and develop a variety of approaches designed to acquaint them with the rationale for change (Gilder, 1980). Without commitment to adult students from the top administrative levels on down, the structural and fiscal changes necessary to accomplish long-term change will not be forthcoming.

Once key constituencies at the University have acknowledged the need for improvements in adult student services, the advisory group and its allies still have a great deal of work to do. Development of realistic timelines and strategies to effect specific changes are important. The proposed changes should be considered from the points of view of who will be affected, what objections may be raised (and what the response from the group will be), and who may lose and who may gain from the changes.

Another important consideration is funding. Proposals for change should present funding alternatives, possible sources of seed money, and, if appropriate, requests for use of facilities and joint funding of personnel (Gilder, 1980). Scott and Holt (1976) recommend that change agents establish credibility for themselves by obtaining small grants from public sources or foundations to establish initial programming changes, especially since small grants often lead to larger monetary commitments, often from the institution itself.

It appears to be in the best interests of Kent State University to redesign its programs and services to better meet the needs of adult students. Declining subsidies from the state, enrollment pressures, and increasing competition for adult students among schools in northeastern Ohio will continue to affect the institution in the future, especially as the numbers of students of traditional age dramatically decrease. The university needs to change its view of the adult student population. According to Hechinger (1975):

> We face the imminent danger that the colleges will view and treat the adult students as mere office temporaries--welcome to fill vacancies and shore up sagging gate receipts, but nevertheless expected to adjust to the academic status quo. Such attitudes could defeat the very purpose of continuing education and squander the mature students' extraordinary potential for giving a new dimension to old institutions. (p. 18)

The forthcoming changes to accomodate adult students must go beyond adding on evening hours here and adult orientations there. The changes should be done after a great deal of thought and long-range planning. Kenneth Young of the National University Continuing Education Association predicts that those institutions who successfully adapt to the increasing population of adult learners will reap substantial benefits. However, "the problem of how to adjust--and adjust properly--is likely to catch many schools in a bind. A lot are not going to change and go out of business. A lot are going to change the wrong way and go out of business" ("Grownups on Campus", 1981, p. 74). It is time for Kent State University to develop a strategic plan for accomodating adult students on campus so that it is among the institutions that continue to grow and flourish in the decades ahead.

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APPENDIX
ADULT SERVICES QUESTIONNAIRE

IN THIS QUESTIONNAIRE, ADULT LEARNERS MEANS STUDENTS WHO ARE 25 YEARS OR OLDER

DOES YOUR INSTITUTION/CAMPUS PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING SERVICES FOR ADULT LEARNERS??

(Please circle)

Yes No 1. A centralized resource center?
a) If yes, which of the following services are provided?
Yes No -- admissions?
Yes No -- academic counseling?
Yes No -- career counseling?
Yes No -- registration?
Yes No -- tuition payment?
Yes No -- financial aid counseling?
Yes No -- other (specify) _____
Yes No -- other (specify) _____

b) How many professional staff members are employed in the resource center? _____

c) If you have evening hours in the resource center, what are they? _____

d) If you have weekend hours in the resource center, what are they? _____

Yes No 2. Child care for students?
a) If yes, during what hours? _____
b) at low cost? _____ at no cost? _____

Yes No 3. Are faculty and/or staff on your campus given special training for working with adult students?

If yes, which office's staff typically provides this training? _____

4. Do you have evening or weekend hours available in the following offices? If yes, what are these hours (e.g. two times per week, 5-8pm)
Yes No a) academic advising offices? Hrs: _____
Yes No b) Bursar's Office? Hrs: _____
Yes No c) Registrar's Office? Hrs: _____
Yes No d) Financial Aids Office? Hrs: _____
Yes No e) Admissions Office? Hrs: _____
Yes No f) Placement Center? Hrs: _____
Yes No g) Health Center? Hrs: _____
Yes No h) Personal Counseling Center? Hrs: _____

5. Do you have degree programs that can be completed:
Yes No --only in the evenings?
Yes No --only on the weekends?

(continued)

(Please circle)

Yes No 6. Do you have a special orientation program for adult students? If yes, do you cover the following topics:

Yes No a) English skills testing?
Yes No b) Math skills testing?
Yes No c) Study skills review?
Yes No d) Academic advising?
Yes No e) orientation to campus facilities (library, etc.)?
Yes No f) other (specify) _____
Yes No g) other (specify) _____

7. Do you offer any of the following courses for credit?

Yes No a) TV courses?
Yes No b) distance-education (correspondence) courses?

Yes No 8. Do you provide assistance to students wishing to earn credit for life experiences?

Yes No 9. Do you actively recruit adult students for your degree programs? if yes, which of the following methods do you use?

Yes No a) media advertisement?
Yes No b) college fairs?
Yes No c) at area companies or corporations?
Yes No d) through community outreach (public libraries, etc)?
Yes No e) through a non-credit course program to initially attract to institution?
Yes No f) other? (specify) _____
Yes No g) other? (specify) _____

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON YOUR CAMPUS/INSTITUTION

Name of your campus/institution? _____
Approximate enrollment at your campus/institution? _____
Approximate enrollment of adult students (over 25)? _____
Urban location? _____ Rural? _____ Suburban? _____ Small town? _____

If I have any questions regarding a response on this questionnaire, to whom may I direct my inquiry?
Name _____ Phone number _____

Thank you for your time and assistance in completing this questionnaire. If you wish to make any additional comments regarding any of your adult student services, please feel free to do so on the back of this page. I will be happy to share the resulting information with each of you from whom I receive a response for use at your own institution.

PLEASE RETURN THIS QUESTIONNAIRE TO ME NO LATER THAN FEBRUARY 24, 1984 BY USING THE ENCLOSED RETURN ENVELOPE OR BY MAILING TO:

Martha Silling
College of Business Administration
Kent State University
Kent, Ohio 44242